

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8597

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USTREASURY WASHDC

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: BGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: ISSUES FOR JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION MEETING--SOVIET  
CUSTOMS PROCEDURES

REF: MOSCOW 4108

USDOC FOR BEWT/DOWNEY

TREASURY FOR PARSKY

1. AS NOTED IN REFTTEL, EMBASSY'S SURVEY OF U.S. BUSINESS  
COMMUNITY IN MOSCOW REVEALED THAT ARBITRARY AND TIMECONSUMING  
SOVIET CUSTOMS REGULATIONS POSE MAJOR PROBLEM FOR OPERATIONS OF  
ACCREDITED COMPANIES. MOST COMPANY REPS VOICED HOPE THAT U.S.  
WOULD RAISE THIS ISSUE AT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING, AND EMBASSY  
CONSIDERES SUCH AN APPROACH DESIRABLE.

2. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, TWO BASIC PROBLEMS ARE INVOLVED: A) SOVIET  
CUSTOMS TENDS TO OPERATE IN AN ARBITRARY AND CONFUSING MANNER.  
THERE IS LACK OF CLARITY REGARDING RATES, RULES AND PROCEDURES;  
AND B) PROCESS OF CLEARING ITEMS THROUGH CUSTOMS IS DIFFICULT AND  
TIME-CONSUMING. WITH REFERENCE TO LATTER POINT, EMBASSY DOUBTS  
THAT MUCH CAN BE DONE; SOVIET CUSTOMS IS THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY  
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IN MICROCOSM. ON FIRST POINT, HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES IMPROVE-

MENTS ARE POSSIBLE. MEMBERS OF U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY, WORKING THROUGH ARTHUR ANDERSEN REP (GEORGE KAISER) HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF SOVIET CUSTOMS AT WHICH PROBLEMS CAN BE DISCUSSED. EMBASSY BELIEVES U.S. DELEGATION AT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING SHOULD PRESS FOR AN EARLY MEETING OF THIS SORT. FURTHER, EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT WE PROPOSE: A) THAT SOVIETS AGREE, AS GENERAL PRINCIPLE, AND AS PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE SOVIET GOVT REGULATIONS, TO ACCORD DUTY-FREE TREATMENT TO EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES NOT PRODUCED IN USSR. AS EXAMPLES, WE COULD CITE STUDDER SNOW TIRES, SPARE PARTS FOR WESTERN AUTOMOBILES (AVOIDING POINT THAT SPARES FOR SOVIET-MADE CARS ARE MOST EASILY OBTAINED IN HELSINKI), AND OFFICE SUPPLIES SUCH AS PAPER (PARTICULARLY FOR PHOTOCOPIERS); AND B) THAT ONE-YEAR PERIOD DURING WHICH OFFICES CAN IMPORT DURABLE GOODS DUTYFREE BE CONSIDERED TO BEGIN, IN CASE OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT, FROM DAY ON WHICH COMPANY IS GIVEN KEYS TO OFFICE, AND FOR APARTMENT FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT, FROM DAY ON WHICH COMPANY IS GIVEN KEY TO APARTMENT, AND 3) THAT FOREIGN TRADE MINISTRY ISSUE SCHEDULE OF TARIFF RATES CHARGED FOR ITEMS IMPORTED BY COMPANIES, EITHER FOR OFFICIAL OR PERSONAL USE. STOESSEL

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